/The Nomadic Tibetans/

In these cases where a man has more than one wife, each wife must have her own tent which will be within the area of the encampment assigned to the husband. Within the tent the wife frequently has full authority. It is she who welcomes and looks after the guests and to whom farewells must be formally made.

As is the case with most of Tibet, the problem of polyandrous unions remains unclear. One authoritative source assigns such unions to the nomads, and another will insist that it is a phenomenon of the sedentary Tibetans. Each produces logical explanations for its appearance in the one and not in the other. Moreover, the Tibetans themselves will state arbitrarily that it is commoner in one group or the other, but again there is no unanimity of opinion. Out of all the conflicting accounts, it can be deduced that polyandry exists, probably, in both nomadic and sedentary Tibetan populations and that peculiar local situations account for its prevalence in one or the other area. However, it is doubtful that it is uniformly practiced by any section of the population. Side by side with polyandrous families, moreover, polygynous unions are also found. Most common, is a more or less brittle monogamy.

Since the people of the black tents practice transhumance, their nomadic activities are measured in terms of elevation, rather than actual distance covered. From late spring through fall the encampments as units climb to successively higher pastures and then descend again. Winter finds them at their lowest elevation and the group is no longer a tent-circle. Instead of the regular circular arrangement of the yak-hair tents, the winter settlement may consist of sod-covered huts, which may be of wattle and daub construction, rammed earth, tent-roofed sod walls or similar materials. There is no regular arrangement of the huts, because the factors which led to the arrangement of the campsites are not operative.

The different activities around the year help dictate the limits of communal action. The short growing seasons of the successive pastures, necessitate frequent shifts. Thus eight or nine movements between winters are not uncommon. The tasks of striking camp, keeping the herds along the route and reestablishing the circles involve maximum cooperation from all involved. None can travel with impunity ahead or behind the others. The encampments represent military units because raids and stealing herds are recognized as rungs on the ladder to success.

In winter, the activities are more diversified. Gone is the constant vigilance against human and animal foes. Gone too, is the necessity of frequent, simultaneous uprooting and reestablishment. Life is conducted at a more leisurely and individual pace. Many of the nomads form trading caravans, which will journey beyond the settlements of the Tibetan farmers to trade their wool, hides, and other products among the Chinese Moslems. These caravans may be composed of some of the men of a single

1: Washington S-4 (no date). 1956 AF13 Northwest China AF13

encampment, or they may consist of a group of friends or relatives. Some go only to the neighboring farmers, but more gain is to be found in the trade at the border. Winter also is the time for weaving the yak hair cloth, for preparing and repairing equipment, and for visiting and gossip. The period of high festivity is approaching. The traders return from their travels and the nomads flow en masse to the monastery centers for the observation of the mid-winter festival. During the festivals religion is combined with both pleasure and business. Almost every family has its representatives among the monks so that family reunions heighten the gaiety of the season. Trade is brisk for the monastery centers are also market towns. Maidens contract alliances with the swashbuckling young nomads, and some of these affairs ripen into marriages. Business of another nature may also be contracted at this time. Once the spring movements commence, the nomads find it advisable to travel with a minimum of baggage both for actual convenience of movement, and to lessen the loss incurred should a raid occur. Thus advantage is taken of this opportunity to store one's valuables in the care of the monastery, and more particularly with a monk related to the owner. From mid-winter until the horses are too jaded in early spring, the major occupation can only be described as robbery and attempted robbery. Large-scale caravans from other parts of Tibet and from China make the most desirable prey.

Ekvall and Yu reported that the winter grazing grounds belonged to the encampment, and that the territories in which the pastures were located, and assigned, were the property of the larger units (or tribes, as they are sometimes called) consisting of a number of encampments. The winter hay fields were individual's own property. These units might be under the jurisdiction of a chief or they might form a rather loose confederation without marked central authority. In some instances the actual "chief" might be one of the local monasteries, whose head will exercise civil authority over the laity. Infrequently a chief might even control several larger units, in which case he would be referred to as gyalpo or "king." But even the most nearly autocratic chief exercised caution in asserting his position, lest a disgruntled encampment, or some tents, might leave his jurisdiction for the welcoming embrace of some other chief. The latter would then have complete information necessary for conducting a successful foray against the first group. Thus, just as within the encampment, the actual authority in these larger units rested in the hands of a council of elders, representing each of the component encampments.

Although there are clans in Tibet which have played important roles in the history of some of the ruling families, they perform no major function among the Tibetan nomads. The encampment is not based on clan affiliation. Such affiliations even cross the lines of the larger units. (Cf. Ekvall, 1939 and Yu, 1947). The clan

313 mostly in Kansu. In 1945, large-scale afforestation projects were
[185] undertaken by the provincial government, especially in Ninghsia. The exceptional fact about these projects was that the young seedlings were properly cared for and did not die as so frequently occurred in other afforestation schemes. The Ninghsia projects were, of course, taken over by the Chinese Communists.

311 In the loess plateau region, between the great wall and the
137 mountains, and between the Tibetan Highlands on the West and
313 the Yellow plain to the East, there is almost no forest cover. Forests are found only in the more inaccessible areas or in temple groves. Their disappearance is related partly to needs for lumber but also to the introduction of new crops, such as corn and Irish potatoes, which will grow on the upper slopes. Many hills
[241] were burned over in order to clear the land for a cultivation
[134] which could last for only a few years until erosion swept away the last trace of soil.

5. The border region

*175 In 1937, the Chinese Communists occupied the northern portion
*668 of Shensi as well as the fringe areas of Chinghai, Kansu, and
433 Ninghsia. This region was regarded as the Shensi, Kansu, Ninghsia, Chinghai border region and was developed by the Communists
[437] into a relatively self-sufficient area. When they were able, they exchanged surpluses such as oil, salt, herbs, skin and wool for articles which they could not as yet produce in sufficient quantity.

*175 The Communists carried out land reform as soon as they were
*668 fully entrenched in power. Large land holdings were cut up and
[423] parcelled out to peasants with little or no land. Rents and interest rates were reduced, efforts were made to extend cultivation, increase the number of draft animals, and develop labor cooperation beyond family circles.

*175 In a study by Yung-ying Hsü, issued by the Institute of Pacific
*668 Relations, there is a summary of the economy and military status
433 of this region. There are numerous statistics to indicate increases in production of certain crops. These are the only available statistics we have for the region during this period, and the figures seem to indicate that despite the excessive expenditures for the maintenance of an army and guerilla forces as well as a governing body and administration, progress was made in raising the level of agriculture. However, by 1943, trade figures for the region indicate an imbalance of payments and a drain of currency from the region indicating that increasing military commitments were absorbing the created wealth of the region.

13 D. Conclusion

241 We may sum up the obstacles to agricultural development as
311 follows: geographic and climatic problems are the most serious. The amount of cultivable land that can be reclaimed and used for

3:Cable & French M-5 (1926) 1927
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cultivating a small patch of ground. The women wore their hair in a number of small plaits, Tibetan fashion, but their features were more refined than are the Tibetans, and they impressed us as being most intelligent.

We returned to Kanchow over a road which lay between poppy fields now filled with gaunt, naked, dry poppy heads from which the juice had been extracted. By the roadside, at small tables on which were piles of silver, and scales to weigh it out, sat the buyers of crude opium, and before them squatted groups of farmers haggling and quarrelling over the price of the bowls of thick, brown juice—the tragic harvest of their fields. The two months which we were able to give to Kanchow passed only too rapidly, and as we were planning an extensive missionary journey for the early autumn we were obliged to start again for Suchow. We had only reached the first stage of the journey when our mule Lolly showed signs of illness, and we unwisely called in a village veterinary who assured us there was no cause for alarm, and wrote out a prescription.

Shortly after this noxious draught had been administered, the poor beast lay down in the inn court and died. Molly, who in ordinary circumstances would whinny incessantly if separated from her companion, took one long look at Lolly's dead body, heaved a sigh, and never called for her again.

On August 24th we reached Suchow, and immediately began the necessary preparations for the long journey ahead, in the course of which our aim was to visit every city of Kansu situated beyond the Great Wall.

We were a party of eight, including Elder and Mrs. Liu, and their little boy. In order to carry sufficient supplies we had to purchase a cart of the type peculiar to Kansu, having been made by a village carpenter

491 Here, as in Lanchow fu, the sum set aside since ancient times
661 by the imperial government for bridge repairs has played a certain part in the income of the hsien of Hsining. The city lies in the far west of China proper. And China represents the world to its inhabitants as well as its rulers. Therefore, outside the west gate of Hsining - as every child in the city knew - lay the tien bien yüe ya kiao, that is, the bridge which officially connects the earth with the moon. Now, no one can blame the holders of the honorable post of hsien for annually pocketing the monies with which, by royal decree, they are supposed to keep this important bridge in repair. But I was shown at least one stone which is supposed to have at one time been the beginning of the bridge. From here the way leads to the Hsi tien, the "western heaven," as Tibet is referred to by many Buddhists.

231 Another peculiarity of the city of Hsining is the enormous num-
494 ber of ponies which its inhabitants keep. There are surely several thousand of them. Almost everyone has his pony and everyone setting out on a journey, every cobbler or apprentice, rides horseback. Feed is cheap and the price of ponies not high. And if one is not too particular, one can buy up quite a number of ponies in
437 a rather short time. In this respect Hsining is a favorable starting point for a journey into Tibet, and that is why I again looked it up. Nevertheless, it took me a whole week to buy three good ponies. During this time I had ten Chinese women at my inn sew a large servants' tent for me. Carpenters, saddlers, shoemakers, smiths were engaged to complete my equipment. There was nothing in stock, everything had to be ordered. I had to bargain endlessly for every single object. For every button or piece of rope, for every little thing ten times its value was boldly demanded, laboriously I was obliged to bargain it down to a normal price, and if a day later I bought a duplicate, the tiresome haggling began again. Besides, there were so many things I wanted which I could not get. For instance, I had great trouble in that big city finding three pieces of wood which could be used as tent poles. The region has extremely little wood. After we had spent days looking in vain for a piece that would serve as a ridge pole, the son of the general finally took what I needed out of the arsenal and gave it to me.

Anyone wishing to travel in China should first of all tuck patience into his traveling bag. A Chinese must never be allowed to notice that you are in a hurry for a thing. In Hsining fu, also, all trade, whether in the open market or in shops, is carried on

5: Tafel--285 T-3 (1905-1908) 1914 AJ1 Tibet
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inside the sleeves of one's jacket. That is what the long Chinese sleeves are for. Whether I wanted to buy a pony or butter or a supply of flour, the dealer always held out his greasy and torn sleeve to me and I had to put my narrow and short European sleeve into his. Inside you pull and squeeze each other's fingers, and the people standing around cannot see what is going on. /174/ At first not a word is spoken. If it is a question of a larger article, a pony or some such thing, not only the two parties involved in the deal but soon all their companions and acquaintances, even the gapers in the streets slip their arms into each others' sleeves. Nothing delights a Chinese more than a little deal of this kind. They curse each other or laugh at each other. "Too much!" - "You're crazy!" - "I don't intend to give my nag away!" - thus the voices shout in confusion; but no one says anything about price. The one who wishes to name a price always so and so many fingers into the sleeves of the other. The index finger alone means one, index and middle finger together mean two, and so on up to five. Six is thumb and little finger; seven, thumb, index finger and middle finger. In order to express eight one spreads out one's thumb and index finger. Nine is the index finger bent in the shape of a hook. After ten the procedure is repeated, for everyone knows enough about business to know whether a thing is worth one, ten, or a hundred taels. Sixteen, for instance, is expressed by first holding out the index finger and then gathering together the thumb and little finger with it. While this procedure is going on many an importunate little deserter looks for better hunting grounds; for what inland Chinese does not have lice in the sleeves of his jacket?

My plan was now in winter, as long as it was coldest and the ice was thickest, to go to the "blue lake," the "Koko Nor" (1) in order

1. The "blue lake" of Northeast Tibet is today most commonly known through the Russian travelers by its Mongolian name of Kuku nor. Kuku, or Küke, as it is written, means "blue." The Chinese call the lake Hsi hai or "west sea" or also Tsch'ing hai, meaning "blue sea." The Tibetans call it Ts'o ngon bo or, slurred, Ts'o ngombo which also means "blue lake."

to explore it very thoroughly and above all to plumb its depth. The lake is already beyond the region in which it is possible in an emergency to get along with the Chinese language; it lies above

361 563 443 Dankar is a most interesting place, compared to the eternal monotony of other Chinese cities and city dwellers. And no wonder. It is the most important gate into Northeast Tibet! There is no other city until one gets to Tatsienlu in the south that has such convenient connecting roads into the interior of Tibet as well as into the rich trade sources of the lowlands toward the coast. Not only the nomads living around the Koko Nor, but also the Tsaidam Mongols, even those from Tätschinär, Lhasa merchants and inhabitants of the Tibetan province of K'am all come to Dankar. They all get edibles, primarily. For many tribes the market place of Dankar, or Dunkur gäsching, as they say, is almost the only /180/ place where they can trade in their wool, skins and salt for their annual supply of flour, tea, and luxury items. The Tibetans of the northeast have become economically completely dependent on the Chinese.

485 ●437 631 The practical-mindedness of Chinese officials, which is always bent on the cheapest possible management, has drawn its own advantages from this and prepared its administrative regulations accordingly. From olden times there has existed in Dankar the arrangement of the hsië dia (hsië kia) (1), that is, officially-recog-

1. hsie means "to rest"; kia means "house" or "family" (pronounced dia in the Hsining dialect).

nized lodgings for nomads. In former times each tribe even had its own particular hsië dä where only the members of one tribe might live as long as they were in the city. Today this system has changed insofar as the nomads may freely choose their hsië dia, but everyone still adheres strictly to the rule that Tibetans and Mongols do not use the ordinary inns, but that these are open only to Chinese. There are about thirty hsië dia in Dankar. Their innkeepers, Chinese or Mohammedans, must buy the right to house Tibetans or Mongols from the Chinese municipal board. They are wealthy people who, besides a spacious house also have large stables and cattle yards with room enough to take in a Tibetan with 300 yaks who arrives one day and a Mongol who arrives the next with almost as many camels.

The hsië dia arrangement is ancient. We learn about it also from Huc and Gabet, the two French Lazarists who came to Dankar in 1845 dressed as Mongolian lamas. Huc tells definitely that as a Mongol he could find shelter only in such a house. In the

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hsiē dia the guests are charged nothing for lodging and food. Ac- 485
cording to the general custom of the country, the innkeeper makes 437
his money only on those who have something to sell. He negotiates 631
the wool sales of his guests, the sale or exchange of horses; he is agent and interpreter, as well as lawyer in the yamen and mediator in criminal cases between the tribe and the mandarin. However, this versatile role of an innkeeper is not a Chinese invention. Far in the interior of Tibet and far south, even in Tatsienlu and in many other Tibetan border towns I found it customary to balance the hotel bill only by a certain percentage of the turnover. In Dankar the Chinese officials have also imposed upon the hsiē dia (2) a

> 2. In Chinese hsiē dia is used both for the institution as well as for the owner and the employees.

certain responsibility and an obligation to give notice to the police, and in this way have made him at the same time a sort of representative of the Chinese yamen. For this reason one must always have a license in Dankar in order to take in Tiberans and Mongol from the interior; this costs 60-100 taels. Through the hsiē dia the officials learn who comes and goes. Tibet who have not subjected themselves to the jurisdiction of the Chinese may not visit the market in Dankar. This is regarded as a great disadvantage for far and near the city is known for its cheap goods, especially food. For instance, the Ngolok dealers may never enter the city. They spend the night in some corner not far off. But with larger caravans, with goods, [illegible] they cannot venture to appear in the city. They may not carry on trade. Their things would immediately be confiscated and they would be accused of some theft or robbery which some other Ngolok years ago may have committed against a Chinese or a wealthy Tibetan and which the Chinese mandarins had not had a chance to punish, as in the case of the Demang. The Chinese Kansu government does not have a single military post in all of Northeast Tibet and yet their officials control a very large part of the country, with the exception of Ngolokhsaburn which nominally belongs to Szechwan.

In the year 1894 when the well-known French traveler Dutreuil 000
de Rhins was robbed and murdered in K'iani and the French government insisted on punishment for the criminals, the Chinese officials first had the hsiē dia in Dankar arrest all the people of that tribe who had come to trade in the city. By means of these hostages they

574 escorted!" he repeated over and over again, not even giving me a chance to ask for it. Then, suddenly interrupting himself, he asked us politely but firmly to drink our tea and because we pretended not to hear him, he repeated his request. There was nothing for it but to take up the tea cup and "Tso-aa!" Departure! cried the doormen at the same instant. Throughout China the invitation to drink one's tea is only an invitation to leave, and if a guest reaches for the teapot which must always be placed beside him when he comes for a visit, then everyone knows that it is time to depart. Within less than five minutes /208/ we again found ourselves in the doorway. In spite of our doubtful reception I was blissful, for what more could I wish than a small escort for my further journeys. At that time I still had confidence in the words of the higher Manchu officials, all of whom had received me well and treated me with friendliness, and I still had the best opinion of the amban, especially because he had returned my New Year's gifts with a large, costly dinner which, however, he had had served to me at my inn. But this is not an unusual custom in China. In larger cities it is also [437] often customary to make out notes to some restaurant for a dinner of four or eight persons. These notes one may give away to someone else without embarrassment, and it sometimes happens that the tenth man into whose hands the promissory note falls really takes advantage of it, even though he may not know the first man who is actually paying for the dinner.

527 541 788 On the fifth day of the New Year shortly after sunrise the general and all the officers of the city set out to fetch the god of entertainment. A gala sedan chair which bore the written character Si (entertainment) was placed in a temple outside the east gate. In front of this letter, which was more than a meter high, the general and the men accompanying him fell on their knees in the dust of the road and kowtowed three times. Later on, the letter on his sedan chair was brought to the city in solemn procession and then placed in the general's yamen. There it remains throughout the year and is a guarantee that in the coming year there shall be no lack of entertainment and theatrical performances of all kinds in the city.

On the tenth day of the New Year the so-called spring festival was celebrated in Hsining fu. Scarcely was the sun up on that day when all the streets leading to the east gate were crowded with people. The Chinese farmers with their wives and children poured into the city from distant places. All the roofs of the main street were covered with representatives of the fair sex whose faces were

[text continues ... p. 354]

last the heavy bastions with the terribly long row of battlements, 000
the city of Hsining fu, this thousand-year-old fulcrum of Chinese power on the borders of the eternally restless mountain folk of Tibet, rose up in front of me.

Just as I entered the gigantic west gate at the head of my imposing band of servants with all my mules, horses and dogs, and trotted down the narrow muddy streets of the city, other guests arrived who had come up from the distant lowlands of China, a band who had traveled faster than we and were nevertheless not tired from the long journey; in fact, at the end they were so overjoyed at the magnificent sunset that they made lengthy detours around the Chinese city. Hundreds of mighty brown Milanen had arrived who were now hovering about in haughty groups. With hoarse whistles they announced to mankind the coming of spring.

Now it was high time to begin my summer expedition. Now, up there on the cold high steppes of Tibet the longed-for green was soon to appear, which was so essential to the success of my plans, which was to help me solve my distant, important problems.

Early the next morning I began my new preparations. This was the actual start of my big journey, now I was to spend a long time in the "Ts'ao ti," the vast grassland which Tibet and its endless high steppes are generally called in Hsining. First of all I was again obliged to spend days haggling with grain and peas merchants, with millers and macaroni makers. I shopped for food supplies, barter goods, tools and implements which were supposed to last me and my companions for a whole year.

The thing that made it so endlessly difficult to equip the expedition was the pettiness of Chinese trade. In Hsining fu there are no wholesale merchants. It is a city of officials, not a commercial city. No one could take care of a large order. I had to buy up everything in small quantities and deal with a great number of purveyors, and, of course, not one of them realized that time is money. Not one of them displayed any of the generous, speculative mentality which we are accustomed to find in the coastal Chinese. They are clumsy peasant folk, these people in the rich granary of the Hsining Valley. With slow peasant craftiness, with thousands of mean artifices and tricks they sought to squeeze out as much as possible for themselves. /259/ Sometimes there was bran, sometimes even sand in the flour I ordered or in the rice. The Kansu people are used to controls even in the most insignificant details; they hoped that 443 437

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443 with me this would not be the case. A Chinese never trusts another
437 Chinese. The workmen as well as the merchants of Hsining were completely unreliable.

My patience was put to the supreme test when it came to the matter of payment. At times the silver scales seemed to them inadequate and inaccurate, sometimes the silver and copper coins were regarded as too poor. Thus, a felt-maker once demanded that I accompany him into three different shops in order to have the silver pieces which were owing him re-weighed and examined - in all three shops, of course, the scales were slightly at variance - and when I had given him the heaviest weight, the man was still not convinced that he had not been cheated, for he suddenly wanted the entire payment in copper money, in other words, in individual cash. He was satisfied only when he had discovered, after lengthy calculation, that my copper cash pieces which I had obtained from the nearest bank were eight per thousand less than the current exchange and demanded that I make good the difference.

When I decided to pay only through my Chinese bank, because of these time-consuming trade nuances, the fault-finders increased because the silver which the bank paid on my drafts was not as good and pure as my own silver which I had brought from Lanchow and from the coast and deposited in the bank. But if I paid in cash some parties felt that my silver was too white and shiny, others, that it was too yellow or too gray. How often in those days I trotted to the silversmith in order to have a piece of silver worth about 3 or 4 marks pounded up in order to demonstrate again and again that my silver was really genuine and not mixed with lead.

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122 My courtyard in which my mules and horses were staked resembled a small military encampment in those days. Saddlers and tent makers, shoemakers, carpenters and smiths had set up their workshops round about me. My entire caravan was so equipped that it did not differ in the least from an ordinary Tibetan caravan. I would not permit any of it to look the least bit European. Mistrustful Tibetan eyes should not notice anything at all strange about it.

I had decided, chiefly because of the expense, to use yak oxen as pack animals for the food supplies (Plate LIX). They carry less, go very slowly and cannot travel long hours at a time, but their initial cost is less and they need much less care and attention than horses. And did I not, after all, want to travel slowly in order to become well acquainted with the country? Yaks are the original beasts of burden of Tibet. They are accustomed to its poor, short

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the air and even without sun. The Koko Nor rhubarb is bought up by the merchants from the neighboring province of Shensi. For this reason it gets into the hands of Europeans mostly under the name of Shensi- (pronounced: Shansi-) rhubarb. There is also Szechwan, Shanghai-, and Canton-rhubarb, all drug-names which have been introduced by European export firms on the coast or on the Russian border.

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/342/ Dankar and Hsining (1) as well as Suchow are the places

1. At the time of my journey Hsining exported 1,000 and 1,200 picul.

where the merchants from the Chinese lowland, the "Shensi- and Canton guests," take the medicinal plant from the rhubarb-gatherers of the Koko Nor in November and December. These merchants are almost exclusively Kansu Mohammedans who set out in groups of 30 to 40, under the leadership of a master. In this way 400 to 500 men journey annually from the valleys of the Hsining prefecture in order to hunt for rhubarb. These leaders are small, independent employers who take the risk of a journey into dangerous Tibet. They pay their men two to three taels a month with free maintenance. In order to be assured in advance of a certain price for their goods and not be subject to too much subsequent speculation, the merchants of the lowland usually bear the cost of the equipment and the rather expensive licenses which may be bought from the amban yamen and also from the individual native chieftains. All my Mohammedan servants had already been in the Ts'ao ti digging for rhubarb. The chief harvest time is September when the small fruit is ripe. Then the rhizomes are less juicy. Of ten pounds of freshly-dug roots, about seven pounds remain after they are dried. In July, on the other hand, they are so spongy that only three pounds remain out of ten pounds, and the efficacious ingredients are not present in such large amounts as in the fall. In the winter and as long as the plant has no leaves, the rhizome is considered "empty."

The gatherers dig out the rhubarb very carelessly. They pull all the larger stalks, those that are more than five or six years old, out of the earth and drag them along with roots attached to the camp sites. There the ring-shaped stricture where the plant part goes over into the rhizome is cut; then the rhizomes are peeled, all the hair

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roots are cut off with a knife, as well as all the old leaves, everything that is, as the people say, "black." Thereupon the clean, wet pieces of root a few inches long are pierced with an awl and strung up on strings to dry in the air. Careful drying is of the utmost importance for the quality and the price. The bulbs may never be exposed to the sun. Thus, they are carefully hung up between the branches of cedar trees (there are no houses or roofs in this region) and where there are gaps in the branches these are filled in with twigs. If the sun dries the roots they are said to become black and the Chinese buyers will not take them or only at much lower prices. The buyers at the Dankar market cut them open in order to see whether they have any black spots. /343/ (1) Only pieces that are yellowish-

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1. See in this connection: A Tschirch: "Studien über den Rhabarber und seine Stammpflanze" in Festschrift für Professor Ritter, Vienna 1904, and the report based on my personal observation: A. Tschirch, Arch. d. Pharm., 1907, p. 680 and Schweiz. Wochenschr. f. Chemie und Pharm. 1910, no. 12, "Zwei interessante Pflanzen des Berner Botan. Gartens," with a good illustration of Rheum tanguticum which was grown from the seed I gathered at the border of Tsaidam (near Dulan gomba). - Further, see C.C. Hosseus, Osterr. botan. Zeitschr. 1911, no. 12, "Die Stammpflanze des offiziellen Rhabarbers"; Arch. d. Pharm. 1911. p. 419, "Rheum palm., die Stammpflanze," Südd. Apoth.-Ztg. p. 239.

The pieces, which are peeled on the spot, are examined in Dankar and cleaned again, then packed in boxes which are sealed with oiled paper. All the exporters of medicinal rhubarb in Shanghai say that it is extremely hygroscopic. It must be very carefully handled in the moist coastal climate. There it is often re-dried in order to keep it from getting moldy, but then it often loses its quality. The so-called Muscovite rhubarb which comes over the Russian-Mongolian border and via Kiakhta travels through a drier climate and is therefore justifiably considered better, aside from the fact that it derives from North Tibet, that is, from the Rheum palmatum which contains 2.8 to 4 percent oxymethylanthrachinonen.

red all the way through bring a good price in Dankar. Twelve to

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278 fourteen taels were paid in 1894 for 100 catties. At the beginning
437 of this century the price in Dankar dropped to 8 to 9 taels. The rhubarb from Kue de brings 1 to 2 taels less because its rhizomes are blacker and are therefore considered less efficacious.

424 The Mongols and Tibetans use this rhubarb only for dyes, not for
386 medicinal purposes. On the other hand, they use the stems of
262 another kind which the Mohammedans call sche hoang, that is, stone-rhubarb, with leaves that are only slightly slit, as a vegetable.

On July 10 I left the Schang yurts. I had set Barun-Tsaidam as
008 my next goal, in order to supplement my supply of flour, which I had not succeeded in doing in Schang. In Barun there is supposed to be more barley than in Schang.

We had some difficulty in getting started. The small animals had not got used to each other. The 37 head which I bought always tried to stray apart and head for any larger herd. It was a mystery to me how my men with unfailing accuracy always extricated my animals from a flock of many hundreds of sheep and goats. But the Chinese are good at things like that. It always amuses me to recall an example illustrative of this distinguishing trait. It happened at an inn in the lowlands. A guest and, of course, a grass widower had just returned home from market carrying his supper consisting of meat, eggs and flour, and the necessary fuel for it under his arm. He threw the bundle of twigs down in front of the door of his room. While he was in the room in order to fetch his cooking pot and pan, a policeman who was keeping the all-too troublesome gapers away from me, hoping to earn a good tip, got himself a stick from the bundle of faggots of my neighbor and paraded up and down with it at some distance in front of the gate of the inn. The grass widower returned. He took up his bundle and immediately discovered the damage. A mere glance, and he recognized his property in the hands of the policeman. Now, there was a second policeman with a similar stick in his hand, standing at the gate, but the injured man had immediately picked out the right one and also got back what belonged to him. The lies and excuses of the policeman were powerless against his plausible arguments. He was able to give a minute description of his firewood.

133 We traveled over low hills and a small saddle: at the end of our day's march we crossed over the Yogh'ore gol, the outlet of the Tossun Nor and the Alang Nor. The Yogh'ore Valley is wide and flat-bottomed, the river is /344/ divided into several branches and was now, at the time of the monsoon rains, rather deep. I had

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643 that it hung down below their knees. They all had silver-mounted
291 swords made in Lhasa in their belts and almost all of them wore red and blue mandarin buttons and pheasant feathers on their Manchu hats. I served my guests tea, tsamba and mutton in my tent. My Mohammedan Han had to act as my interpreter, for the dsassak pretended he
782 understood only Mongolian. After the customary amenities, he came out with the purpose of his visit. He had heard that I had come through infected areas and he was afraid his yak herds would become infected if I traveled farther up the valley with my caravan. He also implored me not to hunt in his territory. He and his people had taken a vow not to harm any wild animal for two years. They hoped in this way to win the favor of the local spirits. For this he promised to give me barley and wheat flour inexpensively in his village and to transport a part of my collections back to Hsining fu. After his call, the dsassak rode off over the stony path, to his home in the plain 40 kilometers distant.

563 I had obviously gained prestige through the dsassak's visit. He
342 had been accompanied by a young Mongol named Dyoba Dyentsen
574 (Plate LXXVI) whose yurt stood only a short hour's distance from me and who now invited me to visit him, as did his neighbors. I started my round of visits at the yurt of my nearest neighbor. As I approached, the whole family came bursting out of their round, dirty-white beehive. We greeted each other before the door very deliberately with low bows, until finally I, as the first person, stumbled through the wide open narrow, double-winged wooden door common to all Mongol yurts, and over the high threshold into the dim room. Here the wife and the grown daughter served me a peaked mound of tsamba decorated with flecks of butter and arranged with loving care on gaily-trimmed wooden plates and bowls. I was also given first-class tschürra, the skin of milk which had been carefully gathered, and the tail piece of the most-recently killed mutton, with the bristly tail attached, - in short, I was entertained like a high-ranking lama.
[576] When I was ready to leave, all the members of the family dashed out of the yurt, then came my servants, and I had to be the last to leave the tent-house. This is ancient Mongolian etiquette.

563 But I was even more elaborately received by Dyoba Dyentsen.
● 437 He was /347/ a young unmarried man in his late twenties, who was able to read and write Mongolian and Tibetan. He was a wanda, a
[792] priest who had not taken his examination, and the son of a family who, according to local standards, was considered wealthy. When I rode to his yurt, a sheep was killed in my honor. Dyoba had a

1 [ie., of Barun. - Analyst]

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remarkably open and honest nature which quickly drew me closer to him. He wanted, of course, to do business with me, but he did not, like all the rest, waste a lot of time charging the highest prices which one then had to force down to the proper amount with a lot of haggling. I bought sheep, yaks and horses from him and then he told me a great deal about his life, about the many, many disputes with the Horkurma Tibetans up at the source waters of the Hwang Ho. Once they drove away 100 camels belonging to the Barun, and gave them up again only for a high ransom although they could not even use them in their swamps. He sighed over the life of the nomad, over the great nuisance of having to change camp-sites, of endlessly having to pack and unpack household goods, and said he envied the farmer who could call a stationary house his own. He complained of their poor customs, of the fact that within their families, in decided contrast to those of the Chinese, they always differentiate very strictly between "mine" and "thine," that their women have too many rights and that this causes endless quarrels, that trading was difficult because the women had too little vision and would often not permit the most favorable cattle sale. "The women take pride only in having large herds, they never consider how quickly an epidemic can snatch away the animals, or robbers carry them off." At the time of my visit, people were busy shearing the sheep. The thick winter wool was cut off and half pulled out with iron shears a foot long. (1)

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1. A picul (100 catties or 65 kilograms) of the rather coarse wool of Mongolian sheep cost 4 taels in Barun. Two and one-half tael were charged for the transport from Tsaidam to Dankar, so that on the Chinese border a picul costs the merchants to 6 1/2 taels 20 marks. While I was in Barun a mounted courier arrived from Dankar with a document saying that the agents of the Yang Hang (the Tientsin firms) had set the price per picul at 9 taels for this year and could not give a cash more. The resultant increase of 2 1/2 taels for the small wool-buyer was considered much too little. The wool business of Tsaidam was thereby supposed to have become practically profitless. The year before, 11-12 taels was paid per picul by the Yang Hang in Dankar.

The yak cattle are also sheared in July, that is to say, their belly hair, which is used for making Tibetan tent walls and for ropes, is plucked out by the owners. The